

Chancellor Parent Cabinet Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 11, 2015
5:30-8:00 PM
DCPS Central Office

Meeting Objectives

Meeting participants will:

1. Better understand the role of the Office of Teaching and Learning in DCPS.
2. Learn how Cornerstone assignments will help ensure equity in academic rigor across DCPS.
3. Provide feedback on how OTL shares information with parents about Cornerstone assignments.

Meeting Attendees:

- *DCPS Chancellor's Parent Cabinet Members:* DCPS Chancellor's Parent Cabinet Members: Davena Archie, Nazanin Ash, Jessica Bonness, Olivia Chase, Camille Fair-Bumbray, Laurence Gill, Helene Klusmann, Michael Koppenheffer, Laura Levine, Corinne McIntosh-Douglas, Matthew O'Hara, Cristóbal Rodríguez, Shanti Sale, Kevin Sampson, Sweta Shaa, Shameka Stewart, Tom Strike, and Jerome Young
- *Not in Attendance:* Connie Brown, E. Andre Carter, Vivian Guerra, Christena Howell, and Kimberly Johnson
- Chancellor Kaya Henderson
- *Office of Family and Public Engagement:* Josephine Bias Robinson, Shanita Burney, Cassandra Sánchez, and Allison D'Aurora
- *Guest Speakers:* Brian Pick, Chief of the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) and Emily Durso, Chief of the Office of Planning and Postsecondary Readiness

Notes:

Topic	Comments
Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Graduations began this week and will continue through June 19.▪ DCPS Night at National Park was held on June 3. Around 3,900 DCPS students, school staff, and Central Office staff attended this annual event held in partnership with the Washington Nationals to recognize DCPS. As part of the event, a West Education Campus student kicked off the game by announcing "Play Ball," six DCPS students were recognized on the field, and Principal Darrin Slade from H.D. Woodson High School threw the first pitch.▪ DCPS will march in the Pride Parade on June 13.▪ Parent Cabinet members conducted the following outreach with their school communities:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Shared the video and general information on Cornerstone assignments with parents and school staff.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some Cabinet members received negative feedback from school staff on Cornerstones because they were hesitant to implement a new program. ▪ School staff want to know how Cornerstones will fit in with their curriculum plan if their school is autonomous. ○ Held informal conversations with parents about National Academy Foundations (NAF) Career Academies ○ Supported school communities in connecting with all parents in preparation for school parent organization and LSAT elections.
Update from the Office of Planning and Postsecondary Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emily Durso, Chief of the Office of Planning and Postsecondary Readiness (OPPR) returned to provide updates on the programs she presented on during the April meeting. OPPR implemented many of the recommendations the Parent Cabinet provided on marketing and promoting career and college readiness programs. ▪ OPPR made the following changes in response to the Parent Cabinet's feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OPPR will begin College Career Clubs in two additional middle schools in School Year 2015-2016: Eliot-Hine Middle School and Hart Middle School. These clubs will offer similar programming and opportunities to the DC Meets Washington summer program but over the course of an entire school year. Browne Education Campus will be entering its second year of partnership with College and Career Clubs. If successful, OPPR hopes to introduce the College and Career Club Program to more middle graded schools in School Year 2016-2017. ○ OPPR is contracting with a vendor to produce a promotional video on College and Career Education in DCPS high schools. The video will be posted to the DCPS website, but it will be available for high schools to use in their individual enrollment efforts. ○ Mass media CTE students from 1-2 of our high schools will participate on student teams that will design a marketing campaign for CTE Programs in DCPS high schools. OPPR is working alongside mass media instructors in DCPS schools to create the outline for this program, which will be targeted to students in grades 9,10, and 11. This initiative was developed as a direct result of an idea Cabinet members shared during the April monthly meeting.
Focus Topic: Cornerstones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the next school year, the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) will launch Cornerstones, a new initiative designed to make learning more equitable across all DCPS schools. Cornerstones are engaging and relevant assignments across all grade levels and content areas, including English Language Arts, math, science, social studies, art, health and physical education, and world languages. Each Cornerstone uses a high-impact instructional model or method built on research-based techniques. For each Cornerstone, students produce meaningful student work, such as essays, oral presentations, musical pieces, or art products. Students in the same grade level across all DCPS will complete the same Cornerstones. ▪ DCPS has recruited 104 teachers to develop over 200 Cornerstones over the summer for grades K-12. Each Cornerstone will last two to ten days. ▪ Cornerstones also create a strong professional development system for teachers. All teachers will receive ongoing professional development (PD) on implementing Cornerstones in their classroom. Teachers will lead the

	<p>PD sessions, which will now be available for teachers teaching the same grades and subject areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cornerstones will define what it means to be a DCPS school. They will be a shared experience that all students have throughout their entire DCPS career. They are lessons DCPS can guarantee each student completes. ▪ DCPS has developed curriculum based on common units of study over the past four years. Teachers select their curriculum from these units of study. Cornerstones live within the units of study as shared assignments that all students complete. Beginning in the fall, each teacher will have four Cornerstones to assign their students– one for each quarter. Middle school and high school students will complete four Cornerstones in each of their courses. Students in elementary schools that are departmentalized will complete a total of eight Cornerstones. There will be 48 high school classes that are Cornerstone courses. There will not be Cornerstones for Honors and AP classes next year, but this option is still being discussed. ▪ Teachers have largely provided two types of feedback on Cornerstones. Generally, teachers are either about Cornerstones because they will replace four lesson plans teachers would otherwise have to develop on their own, or teachers are wary of Cornerstones because it is another program they have to learn. ▪ Cornerstones are an opportunity to more effectively work with DCPS partners. For example, Cornerstones for first and second grades will include the U.S. Botanic Garden and the U.S. National Arboretum, both of which support specific units of study in those grades. ▪ Cornerstones have been developed on the basis of three main tenets that promote equity in academic rigor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rigorous, engaging and relevant content ○ High impact teaching techniques ○ Exceptional student work products ▪ DCPS is building a Content Management System (CMS) so teachers can better manage and access the Cornerstones courses. ▪ Not all Cornerstones are project-based. There are a number of projects in Cornerstones, but there are some other assignments that do not have projects. All of the Cornerstones have a hands-on learning component, and there is some sort of student work product.
Group Discussion on Focus Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cabinet members divided into small groups and reviewed Cornerstone summary overviews for assignments from varying grade levels and subjects. Cabinet members shared out questions and observations with the group about the assignments. ▪ Teachers will have some flexibility in implementing Cornerstones, but there will be some required criteria that all teachers will have to follow to ensure a level of rigor and equity. For example, teachers cannot change the task that is associated the Cornerstone or any of the materials. ▪ To ensure Cornerstones are developed with content that is culturally responsive, OTL is bringing on teams from the Language Acquisitions division and other divisions of the Office of Specialized Instruction to provide this perspective. Cultural pedagogy will also be a part of the PD that teachers receive for Cornerstones. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Cabinet member suggested OTL include a breakout box on the

	<p>assignment summary sheet that offered suggestions for teachers to make additional culturally responsive adaptations, if needed for their classrooms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Another Cabinet member suggested building in a pre-work piece for English Language Learner students or those with a learning disability, so they are prepared to fully engage with the lesson along with their fellow students. ▪ Instructional superintendents, principals, and instructional coaches will play a role in ensuring teachers implement Cornerstones properly. The students' work product will also be a demonstration of how well the lesson was implemented. OTL is working with a group called Learn Zillion, which offers a teaching tool that can help teachers walk students through an entire assignment. ▪ Cabinet members presented the following ideas for two-way communication tools DCPS and local schools can use to engage parents and families about the work happening in Cornerstones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask schools to regularly update their Web page or Facebook page. ○ Create a dashboard for Cornerstones in school's online grading books (e.g. Engrade, Jupiter, etc.). ○ Ask teachers to send regular e-mails to parents with Cornerstone updates. ○ Host monthly parent nights at schools where parents complete a Cornerstone and learn how they can engage with their students at home on these assignments. ○ Send home packets to parents with related materials parents can use with their students at home. ○ Create a gallery of student work that parents can view. This gallery would also benefit future students as they complete Cornerstones. ○ Post short video updates to school websites that feature classroom work time. ○ Ask partners to fund these programs by sponsoring a Cornerstone in a unit of study that is related to their industry. ○ Maintain Listservs sorted by grade and searchable by unit title to send updates home to parents. ○ Develop a mobile app that lists a news feed that update parents on students' Cornerstones progress. Most parents have mobile phones even if they do not have a computer. ○ Produce year-end videos that showcase student work and feature student and teacher reflections. ○ Host district-wide, Cornerstones competitions. This could be another way to attract sponsors.
<p>Open Forum</p> <p><i>This portion of the meeting is reserved for the Cabinet to pose questions of any topic to the Chancellor. The questions and the Chancellor's responses are recorded in this section.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Question: When outside organizations pay to use Ballou High School, where does that fee go? ▪ Response: That money goes to the Department of General Services (DGS), which provides the staff and resources to keep the building open after hours for these types of requests. ▪ Question: Will the rubrics for Cornerstones provide a more highly

	<p>weighted grade for the quarter?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Response: OTL is still considering how Cornerstones will be weighted in students' overall grades. ▪ Question: Will autonomous schools be able to participate in Cornerstones? How can the Cabinet share information about Cornerstones with these school communities when the schools are figuring out how to embrace this kind of initiative? ▪ Response: This would be a time to connect with the instructional superintendent to determine how DCPS and the school will work together on this initiative. ▪ Question: Are there resources and tools available to schools to develop Websites? There is a lot of disparity in the quality of websites across DCPS schools. ▪ Response: Schools manage their own websites, but Central Office has provided templates and resources in the past. The key is for the school to have a dedicated person for this project. The Office of Family and Public Engagement does have resources that can be shared with the group. ▪ Question: Why did DCPS cancel its annual, citywide STEM fair this year after students had submitted entries to participate? Response: DCPS received a small number of entries for the STEM fair this year and did not have the budget to run this event for the limited number of entries. Instead, DCPS tried to host individual, special events with the eight schools that entered the fair. DCPS has considered making this event mandatory for schools to participate, but there is a balance in the amount of requirements Central Office places upon its local schools. Next year, Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and the DC STEM Network will host this event for DC students across this city.
Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The next meeting is July 14, 2015.